

temperament and personal ambition: the mastery of the Mediterranean basin and thereby of the Orient; the extension of a revolutionary liberal system in Europe by the conquest and protectorate of the Continent; and the leadership of the world for the French nation, still as ever enthusiastic for lofty ideals and great deeds. Similar notions had not been foreign to the ancient regime, but England had prevented their fulfilment. The republic, having vaguely enlarged them, had fought for them as France had never fought before, because these things were not to be achieved for a dynasty, and were now illuminated by visions of human regeneration. Still England stood in the way. Bonaparte had given them new shape and new intensity with new definition; logically his success would stand for that most splendid of ideals which has ever dazzled poets, theologians, and kings — the universality of empire for peace and its arts, and the consequent elevation of all mankind. By the conquests of Alexander, Caesar, and Charles the Great, animated as was each in turn by ambition and fiery zeal, nations, tribes, and institutions had been melted in one crucible. Each of those heroes had done a wondrous work in the advance of civilization, but their gains had been indirect. The experiment was to be tried for a fourth time. Would England again and finally dash the French Utopia into ruins?

For the moment Great Britain might be well content. India was safer for the overthrow of Tippoo, Ceylon was conquered, Egypt blockaded, and supremacy regained in the West Indies as well. Malta was in her hands, the Dutch fleet had been destroyed, the French and Spanish fleets were imprisoned at Brest. It is true the liberal agitations inaugurated and kept alive by the discontent of her middle and lower classes were hard to repress; but they were mercilessly crushed as they